

Proposed Palisades Timber Sale

Scoping Notice

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation
Southern Land Office



November 4, 2011

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), is currently evaluating State trust lands near Red Lodge, Montana for potential timber harvest activities. Specifically, DNRC is considering harvest activities in an area encompassing up to 1,140 acres within sections 3, 5, 6, 7,8,9,10,11 and 12 T7S R19E. See (*Proposed Project Area map*).

We recognize that this is an important area to our neighbors and surrounding community members throughout Red Lodge. We want to provide you with every opportunity to ask us questions about the proposed project, provide input, share your concerns, and stay updated on and involved in each step of the process. Please read on to learn more about this proposed project.

What are State trust lands?

Upon ratification of the Montana State Constitution in 1889, the U.S. Congress granted certain lands to the State of Montana for support of common schools and other public institutions. To this day, these lands are held in trust for the specific trust beneficiaries to which they were assigned and ultimately for the people of the State of Montana (1972 *Montana Constitution Article X, Section 11*). The Board of Land Commissioners (Land Board) and the DNRC TLMD are required by law to manage these State trust lands to produce reasonable and legitimate return for the trust beneficiary institutions while considering environmental factors and protecting the future income-generating capacity of the land (1972 *Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 11; Montana Code Annotated [MCA] 77-1-202*).

State trust lands within the proposed project area are currently held in trust for the benefit of the State Reform School (Pine Hills Youth Correction Facility) and Montana State University Morrill Grant.

What are DNRC's objectives with this proposed project?

The mission of the DNRC's Forest Management Bureau is to sustainably manage Montana's forested trust lands to maximize long-term revenue while promoting healthy and diverse forests. The [State Forest Land Management Plan \(SFLMP\)](#) is the plan under which DNRC manages forested State trust lands. In the foreseeable future, timber management will continue to be the primary source of revenue and primary tool for achieving biodiversity objectives on forested State trust lands.

DNRC is proposing the following objectives for this project:

1. Generate revenue for the trust beneficiaries.
2. Improve the effectiveness of fire suppression efforts by reducing fuel loading and increased access.
3. Manage the forest to promote improved health, productivity, and diversity.
4. Capture the value of dead and dying lodgepole pine.
5. Enhance road infrastructure for long-term future management needs.

What activities would be involved with the proposed project?

In order to achieve these project objectives, we anticipate conducting the following activities:

- Timber harvest log hauling, site preparation and slash burning
- Road construction and maintenance. Approximately 8 miles of new road construction.
- Improve existing roads by having them meet the Best Management Practice (BMP) laws. This would involve installation and improving fish passages, and the renovation of existing culverts.

How can I participate?

We are currently in the beginning stages of project development and would like your help in identifying potential issues associated with our proposed activities. Although we encourage you to submit comments *any time* during the MEPA process, we are asking you to contact us with initial issues and concerns by **December 31th, 2011**. Identifying issues early on in project development will help us develop alternatives under which we can reasonably address concerns through the design of the project.

Please send comments:

Via Mail: Andy Miller, Project Leader
ATTN: PALISADES PROPOSED TIMBER SALE
Montana DNRC
321 Main St. # 11
Miles City, MT 59301

Via Email: [Andy.Miller@mt.gov]

Or Submit Comments Online at: [<http://dnrc.mt.gov/Trust/Timber/Information/Palisades/Default.asp>]

For more information on the proposed Palisades Timber Sale Project, please visit our project website at [<http://dnrc.mt.gov/Trust/Timber/Information/Palisades/Default.asp>]. If you have other questions regarding the MEPA process, contact Matt Wolcott at the Southern Land Office at 247-4401 or Andy Miller at the Eastern Land Office at 232-2034.

Sincerely,



Matt Wolcott

Area Manager Southern Land Office

